AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended): A cushioning element operable to contact a secondary object for cushioning, said cushioning element comprising:

a bladder body having inner and outer walls sealingly closed at opposite ends of the bladder body, or one end selectively, and defining at least one chamber between the inner and outer walls,

particulate material comprising micro-spheres in air filling the at least one chamber ~~each of the chambers~~,

the outer wall being flexible and capable of being deformed into a deformed shape as particulate material in the at least one chamber ~~chambers~~ is moved by a pressing operation which is applied to the outer wall, and

the inner wall being operable to receive a mounting member for mounting the bladder body to an article;

wherein the particulate material in the at least one chamber ~~chambers~~ that is moved by the pressing operation remains in the same position upon completion of the pressing operation for eliminating back-pressure exerted by the particulate material against the flexible outer wall, thereby maintaining the flexible outer wall in substantially the deformed shape which the flexible outer wall assumed during the pressing operation, and

the particulate material in air and the sealingly closed opposite ends of the bladder body cooperating to resist leakage of the at least one chamber ~~chambers~~ and configuring the particulate material within a specific space allowing the particulate material to pack and hold the deformed shape assumed during the pressing operation.

2. (currently amended): The cushioning element as claimed in claim 1, wherein the at least one chamber comprises a single molded part or a multi-chambered enclosure, and

wherein the at least one chamber is ~~chambers~~ ~~are~~ disposed in a linear, sequential, or random manner.

3. (original): The cushioning element as claimed in claim 1, wherein the secondary object is a part of a human body.

4. (currently amended): The cushioning element as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a mounting member, wherein said mounting member comprises a mounting surface integrated with at least a portion of said inner wall, said mounting surface being contoured to at least partially correspond to a shape of the secondary object.

5. (currently amended): The cushioning element as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a mounting member, wherein said mounting member is provided on said inner wall.

6. (original): The cushioning element as claimed in claim 1, wherein an opening is provided between said outer wall and the inner wall, said opening for allowing particulate matter to be filled into said at least one chamber; and

wherein a closure element is provided in said opening to close said at least one chamber.

7. (original): The cushioning element as claimed in claim 6, wherein said closure element is coupled removably to said inner wall to permit selective access to said at least one chamber.

8. (original): The cushioning element as claimed in claim 6, wherein said closure element is sealed to said inner wall to seal said opening.

9. (original): The cushioning element as claimed in claim 1, wherein said outer wall is made of a material selected from a group consisting of synthetic and natural rubber, thermoplastic elastomers, thermoplastic resins, polyester, elastomer and plastic reinforced textiles, polyurethane, nylon, textiles, and leather.

10. (original): The cushioning element as claimed in claim 1, wherein said inner wall is rigid; and

wherein said inner wall is integral with a portion of the article on which said cushioning element is mounted and forms a structural portion of the article.

11. (currently amended): The cushioning element as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a mounting member, wherein said mounting member has a mounting surface operable to be coupled to the article.

12. (currently amended): The cushioning element as claimed in claim 1, wherein said particulate matter substantially fills the entire ~~filling~~ volume of said at least one chamber.

13. (original): The cushioning element as claimed in claim 1, wherein said particulate matter comprises individual particles sized and dimensioned to be capable of freely flowing within said at least one chamber to allow said cushioning element to deform.

14. (original): The cushioning element as claimed in claim 1, wherein said particulate matter is made of a material selected from the group consisting of thermoplastics, thermoset plastics, synthetic and natural rubber, quartz, mineral, ceramics, silicon, glass, metals, phenol, wood, silica, sand, salt, seeds, grain, organic materials, microbeads, microspheres, granules, crystallized and powder particles.

15. (original): The cushioning element as claimed in claim 1, wherein the inner wall is rigid.

16. (currently amended): The cushioning element as claimed in claim 1, wherein ~~vanes~~ partitions or ribs ~~posts~~ extend from the inner wall toward the outer wall.

17. (currently amended): The cushioning element as claimed in claim 1, wherein spoke-shaped walls or ~~posts~~ partitions extend ~~from~~ between the inner wall ~~to~~ and the outer wall.

18. (original): The cushioning element as claimed in claim 1, wherein a first end of the cushioning element is molded closed and a second end of the cushioning element is sealingly closed.

19. (original): A cushioning element operable to contact a secondary object for cushioning, said cushioning element comprising:

a bladder body having inner and outer walls sealingly closed at opposite ends of the bladder body, or one end selectively, and defining at least one chamber between the inner and outer walls,

particulate material comprising micro-spheres in air filling each of the chambers,

the outer wall being flexible and capable of being deformed into a deformed shape as particulate material in the chambers is moved by a deforming force applied to the outer wall by the secondary object, the deformed shape corresponding to a shape of the secondary object, and

the inner wall being operable to receive a mounting member for mounting the bladder body to an article;

wherein the particulate material in the chambers that is moved by the deforming force remains in the same position upon completion of the deforming force for eliminating back-pressure exerted by the particulate material against the flexible outer wall, thereby maintaining the flexible outer wall in substantially the deformed shape which corresponds to the shape of the secondary object which the flexible outer wall assumed during the application of the deforming force, and

the particulate material in air and the sealingly closed opposite ends of the bladder body cooperating to resist leakage of the chambers and configuring the particulate material within a specific space allowing the particulate material to pack and hold the deformed shape assumed during the application of the deforming force.

20. (new): The cushioning element as claimed in claim 1 wherein the amount of air in at least one chamber affects properties of the said chamber, including at least one of insulation, compressibility and cushioning effect.